

Sailor Diplomats

www.news.navy.mil

AIH HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY

MAY 2004

Duty in
Europe





[Number 1045]

All HANDS

32 Out of Their Element

May [Features]

[On the Front Cover]

JO3 Keith Smith takes a long look at the inside courtyard of *Castilio De Luna* in Rota, Spain. The Castle of the Moon, as it is translated in English, was built in the Middle Ages for prayer and defense of the neighboring area.

Photo by PH3 Antoine Themistocleous

[Next Month]

All Hands looks at damage control below the ocean's surface aboard USS *Maine* (SSN 741) and finds out what life is like for those who wear Dolphins.

A minimum of two instructors were on site during the entire Mountain Cold Weather Training Course in the Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada. Medical practitioners, including doctors, nurses, physician's assistants and corpsmen from across the country attended the course to learn how to survive in extremely cold environments."

Photo by JO1(SW) M. Darby

14 Sailor Diplomats

What if you could get shore duty in places like Paris or London or Santiago, Chile? If you're looking for duty in exotic places, and have an aptitude for a foreign language, then think about being an operations specialist with the DOD Attache' Office.

Photo by JO1(SW/SS) James Pinsky



[Departments]

Speaking with Sailors — 6

Around the Fleet — 8

Focus on Service — 40

Eye on the Fleet — 42

Eye on History — 46

The Final Word — 48

20 Pearls of the Mediterranean

Navy leaders consider Rota, Spain; Naples, Italy; and Sigonella, Sicily, to be the Pearls of Mediterranean. Find out the quality-of-life improvements and other benefits of living and working overseas.

Photo by PH3 Antoine Themistocleous





SN William Reed stands the aft lookout watch on the fantail aboard the nuclear powered aircraft carrier *USS John C. Stennis* (CVN 74).

Photo by PH3 Mark Rebilas



AN Julian Molinar and AN Nathan Schimpf of USS *George Washington's* (CVN 73) Crash and Salvage team scrub the island of the carrier while they participate in a "Scrub Ex" during a no-fly day. The Norfolk-based aircraft carrier was in the Mediterranean on a scheduled deployment.

Photo by PH1 Brien Aho

Speaking with Sailors

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
MCPON (SS/AW) Terry D. Scott

These questions are from a discussion with Sailors at a recent all hands call at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif.:

Q: I have been in the Navy for three years, and I would like to become a U.S. citizen. Has there been any progress in speeding up that process?

A: Yes. Sailors and all service members who have served honorably for any period of time beginning on or after Sept. 11, 2001, are now eligible to apply for expedited U.S. citizenship.

Speeding up the naturalization process for Sailors on active duty is an issue that's important to many of you in the fleet. The legislation that has helped accelerate this process was signed in 2002 by President George W. Bush as an executive order, providing immediate eligibility for Sailors to become naturalized citizens. Beginning Oct. 1, 2004, the new law allows for U.S. citizenship applications to be finalized at U.S. embassies, consulates and selected military bases overseas. This will include citizenship interviews, testing and administering the oath.

The new law also waives the \$310 citizenship application and fingerprint fee. Your local legal assistance office can provide all the details about

this program and any other questions you may have regarding naturalization. You can also get additional information available on the JAG website at www.jag.navy.mil.

Q: My spouse and I are both E-4s, and both currently serving on sea duty. Is it true that we can both now receive basic allowance for housing (BAH)?

A: Yes, we recently made a change to that policy affecting junior Sailors married to other junior Sailors. If you are both on sea duty you can now each receive BAH. But there are some criteria that you must meet.

Both of you must be E-5 and below, both assigned to sea duty, have no other dependents, share the same household and have declined government housing. You must meet all of these conditions to qualify.

This new entitlement will benefit approximately 1,200 Navy couples, and offer more consistency between our junior and senior enlisted military families serving at sea. Prior to this change, junior dual military couples were entitled to only one joint housing allowance.

The new policy is retroactive to Oct. 1, 2003. For more information on the BAH policy, see NAVADMIN 059/04, on the BUPERS website at www.bupers.navy.mil.



Photo by JO1 Preston Keres

Speaking with Sailors is a monthly column initiated by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy as a way of reaching out to the men and women of the fleet, whether they are stationed just down the road or halfway around the world.

All Hands (USPS 372-970; ISSN 0002-5577) Number 1045 is published monthly by the Naval Media Center, Publishing Division, 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. **Subscriptions:** For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 or call 202/512-1800. Subscription prices are: \$36 (domestic) / \$45 (foreign); \$6 (single copy domestic) / \$7.50 (single copy foreign). **Postmaster:** Send address changes to All Hands, Naval Media Center, Publishing Division 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819. **Editorial Offices:** Send submissions and correspondence to Naval Media Center Publishing Division, ATTN: Editor, 2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819 Tel: DSN 288-4171 or 202/433-4171 Fax: DSN 288-4747 or 202/433-4747 E-Mail: allhands@mediacen.navy.mil Message: NAVMEDIACEN WASHINGTON DC //32// **Authorization:** The Secretary of the Navy has determined this publication is necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the Department of the Navy. Funds for printing this publication have been approved by the Navy Publications and Printing Committee.

All Hands

Number 1045 • May 2004
www.news.navy.mil

Secretary of the Navy
The Honorable
Gordon R. England
Chief of Naval Operations
ADM Vern Clark
Chief of Information
RADM T. L. McCreary
Commander, Naval Media Center
CAPT Joseph F. Gradisher
Chief of Publishing
CDR Jeff Breslau
Deputy Chief of Publishing
+ Print Media Coordinator
LT Bill Speaks
LT Bill Couch

EDITORIAL

Editor
Marie G. Johnston
Managing Editor
JOCS James Slater
Assistant Editor
Stephanie N. Collins
Photo Editors
PH1 Shane T. McCoy
PH3 Antoine Themistocleous
PH3 Todd Frantom
Editorial Staff
JO1 (SW) Monica Darby
JO1 (SCW/SS) James Pinsky
JO2 Cherri Boggs
JO2 Charles L. Ludwig

DISTRIBUTION

Hank Lloyd

PUBLICATION & WEB DESIGN

R + B Communication Design Co.
Graphic Designers
Frederik Hviid
Laura Muncy
Digital Prepress Specialist
Lisa J. Smith

PRINTING

Universal Printing Company
GPO Printing Specialist
John Kennedy

All Hands

Recipient of the following
Awards of Magazine Excellence
for 2000-2003:



Relax...

You Now Have An Entire Year



All Hands* photo editors are looking for the year's top photos for the October "Any Day in the Navy" issue. Deadline for submission is July 15, 2004. Send your best shots taken between July 1, 2003 and July 1, 2004 to: anyday@mediacen.navy.mil
For information on submissions:
www.mediacen.navy.mil/still/anyday

ANY DAY IN THE NAVY

Changes Made to LES to Reduce Identity Theft

Leave and Earning Statements (LES) for all service members and Defense Department civilians, and paychecks for military retirees will soon have more protection against identity theft.


Over the next several weeks, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service will drop the first five digits of a person's social security number from all hard copy pay statements and checks to guard against identity theft.

"The changes apply to everyone," said Patrick T. Shine, acting director, Defense Finance and Accounting Service. The proposal "originated internally and will be phased in over the next couple of pay periods."

This change is for all hard copy leave and earning statements. This does not apply to electronic copies of statements found on myPay, the online system for access and control of customers' personal pay information (<https://mypay.dfas.mil>).

Reports of identity theft have substantially increased in recent years, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which monitors the issue.

Five years ago, the number of complaints to the FTC was roughly 23,400. By 2001, the rate had more than tripled to about 86,200. Based on figures released in January 2004, the number of complaints of identity theft nearly topped 215,000 for 2003. The Social Security Administration also has taken the same step of eliminating the first five social security numbers on the millions of checks it issues.

For more information about the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, visit www.dfas.mil. 

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Defense Finance and Accounting Service.



FFSC Counseling: Proactive, Professional, Progressive

Americans in the civilian sector spend approximately \$7-\$11 million annually on professional counseling. Each session can cost between \$50 and \$150, or more. Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) offers counseling sessions as part of the military benefits package, and these sessions are offered at no cost to Sailors, their families and retired service members.

If service or family members are coping with the loss of a loved one, stressed about deployment or just want to improve personal skills, FFSC can help. Services include individual, marital and family counseling, support groups and crisis intervention.

"The proactive nature of the services and workshops makes the difference," said LCDR Alyce Campbell, director of the FFSC at Naval Air Station New Orleans. "Lots of good people would fall through the cracks without our assistance."

Campbell noted that FFSC services like counseling are not just for people going through a rough time, but for anyone who

just needs some helpful advice.

"Sailors and their families can utilize counseling for common issues such as children having difficulty in school or problems at work," said Terri Rau, program manager for FFSC Professional Counseling in Millington, Tenn. "A misconception some Sailors have about the program is that you must be mentally ill."


When Sailors deal with stress-inducing situations, such as deployment or separation, there are many benefits from counseling. Talking to someone about problems—especially a professional who specializes in the challenges of the military lifestyle—can provide insight on how to deal with that particular problem and greatly reduce anxiety.

"An advantage of talking with a counselor at the FFSC is that they know and understand the Navy," Rau said.

The FFSC provides one-on-one counseling scheduled at the Sailor's convenience. A referral is not necessary. All records are kept private and are not shared with commanding officers unless the problem has the potential to endanger others or the client, or if the problem affects the Sailor's duty. Otherwise, the information does not transfer to permanent medical records. Taking these precautions

allows for the FFSC to safeguard information in compliance with patient privacy policies; it also fosters an environment for free expression by clients.

"Just because these services are free does not lessen the quality of professionals who conduct the counseling," Rau said. "It's a quality program that more Sailors and families should take advantage of."

There are 55 FFSCs and 67 delivery sites worldwide. For more information on the FFSC and programs like professional counseling, or to locate the nearest center, visit FFSC on the Web at www.persnet.navy.mil/pers66 or call the center's 24-hour information and referral hotline at (800) FSC-LINE. 

Story courtesy of the public affairs office, Fleet and Family Support.

Navy Exams "Passed, Not-Advanced" May Equate to College Credit

Some educational institutions have begun offering college credits for Navy advancement exams. Sailors who pass their career advancement examinations but are not advanced in their rate earn "passed, not-advanced" (PNA) points, which until recently were only helpful in enhancing their chances of being advanced in the next exam cycle.

According to the American Council on Education (ACE) Guide, if PNA appears on a member's profile sheet and is posted on the Sailor Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART), they may qualify for a certain amount of college credit.

Electronics Technician 3rd Class Patrick Darby of Ground Electronics Maintenance Division of Naval Station Rota, Spain, found out about the ability to gain more college credits when he was attempting to get a copy of his SMART for an officer's program called STA-21 (Seaman to Admiral).

"I was trying to get an official copy of my SMART transcript for an application to the University of New Orleans and for my STA-21 application," said Darby. "The Navy College Center in Pensacola, Fla., sent me an email asking me if I had PNA'd my last rating exam for E-5. He said that if I had, then according to the Navy, even though I hadn't advanced because of quotas, I had proven myself capable of E-5 credit and work, and was eligible for the college credit."

The term PNA means that a person has demonstrated their occupational proficiency by passing the exam but has not been advanced because of an insufficient amount of points from sources other than the exam, or there may simply be no openings in a particular rate.

Darby received news Jan. 9 that he was able to take advantage of the credits. He sent his profile sheet a few days later to Navy College Center, and it showed up on his SMART soon after.

"I received an e-mail from the Navy College Center saying they had updated my transcript," said Darby. "So I went to the website to verify, and there it was. In my case, for an ET3 [Electronics Technician 3rd Class] going for ET2 [Electronics Technician 2nd Class], I received an additional nine [college] credits."

According to Darby, the points from the exam will help him in the pursuit of his degree and his goal to enter into the STA-21 program.

Shipmates



Storekeeper 2nd Class (SS) James R. Anderson was selected as Fleet and Industrial Supply Centers (FISC) San Diego's Junior Sailor of the Quarter for fourth quarter fiscal year 2003. Anderson is the leading petty officer for Submarine Maintenance at FISC's Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity site. He is depot level repairable storekeeper and is responsible for contract buys over \$2,500. His collateral duties include serving as Combined Federal Campaign and Navy Relief representative, minor property custodian, and division training and mustering petty officer. He is also active as a volunteer for the El Cajon Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol with Operation *Clean El Cajon*.

"I am trying to get a commission through the STA-21 program, which only gives you 36 months to complete your Bachelor's," said Darby. "I would like to get my degree in Naval Architecture with the University of New Orleans. I submitted my SMART transcript to them, and now I am waiting to see what they accepted so I can start planning which classes to take with University of Maryland that will be the most beneficial."


According to www.tpub.com, the Integrated Publishing page, the ACE Guide recommends the amount of credit to be awarded, but it does not guarantee that amount will be given to the member by civilian educational institutions. The college or university a student attends determines if the points on their SMART will qualify as academic credits and grants the credits according to the student's degree program.

"University of Maryland has accepted all of my credits, with most of them counting as electives," said Darby. "But I still haven't heard back from the

University of New Orleans."

Navy members may receive college credit from civilian schools for certain Navy training and work experiences, as well. These include service schools that are at least 45 contact hours; job experience in the Sailor's rating; limited duty officer or chief warrant officer specialties; and certain Navy enlisted classification codes that have been evaluated and recommended for college credit.

According to Darby, the credits are especially helpful to those who are very near graduating and need just a few more credits to complete their degree, or for individuals who are nearing the end of their enlistment and plan on going to school.

"They might leave the Navy as an E-4 or E-5 and have the college credit for the next pay-grade" said Darby. "It could save them a couple thousand dollars when they get out." 

Story by JO3 Amanda Hotz, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Station Rota, Spain.

Coast Guard Certification for Sailors

In an effort to translate Navy training and fleet experience into U.S. Coast Guard ratings and licenses, the Navy's Center for Surface Operations (CSO) announced a formal agreement between the two services in January.

The goal of the partnership is to provide Sailors greater opportunity for professional development and to provide them with recognized certifications from the Merchant Marine community.

"This is about giving our Sailors every opportunity to excel, number one," said CSO Commanding Officer Capt. Steven Johnson, "but also about putting something in their hands to prove their excellence outside the Navy, in the industry of their choice."

Enlisted Sailors within the Boatswain's Mate, Quartermaster, Operations Specialist and Mine-man ratings or Seaman strikers now have the opportunity to apply for an Able-Bodied Seaman rating. They may do this by using Navy course completion,

training acquired through Personnel Qualifications Standards (PQS), and sea duty to satisfy merchant marine training, certification, sea service and exam requirements.

In accordance with the agreement, any Sailor within the above ratings or Seaman Striker, completing Seaman Apprentice (SA) Training and having at least one year of sea duty for every five years of service will satisfy the written exam requirements, as well as the knot-tying practical exam for the Able-Bodied Seaman rating. Required training and sea time must have been received on or after Jan. 1, 1990.

The partnership also determined that any Sailor having completed recruit training and having at least one year of sea duty for every five years of service will be eligible for Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) Basic Safety Training (BST) certification, with the exception of Immersion Suit Training. Recently, a two-hour Immersion Suit Training course was approved for Sailors at no cost on a space-available basis at certain Military Sealift Command (MSC) training facilities.

Sailors having completed Navy

Final Lookout PQS 302 and Helmsman PQS 305 and having at least one year of sea duty for every five years of service will also be eligible for the STCW Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch (RFPNW) certification.


Essentially, Sailors who have completed SA Training, Recruit Training, Lookout and Helmsman final PQS and having at least one year of sea duty for every five years of service, and five years of cumulative Navy sea duty, need only to complete Immersion Suit Training and USCG Lifeboatman certification to apply for an Able-Bodied Seaman rating. Sailors who are not able to attend Immersion Suit Training or Lifeboatman certification at MSC training facilities may complete these requirements through a private vendor using Navy Tuition Assistance.

Additionally, Sailors in any Navy rating who have completed Recruit Training and Immersion Suit Training are eligible to apply for entry-level endorsements in the Merchant Marine, such as Ordinary Seaman, Wiper, Porter and others.

Currently, the Center for Surface Operations is seeking

additional certifications that will make it possible for motivated Sailors to progress toward a Third Mate Merchant Marine Officer's license. The most recent effort by the center to secure Merchant Marine Officer-level certifications resulted in the approval of Navy Advanced Fire Fighting Training, Repair Party Leader School, and Repair Party Leader PQS 318 to meet the requirement of STCW Advanced Fire Fighting certification. Required training must have been received on or after Aug. 1, 1996.

"While the missions of the Navy, the Coast Guard and the Merchant Marines are distinct, we are all seagoing services, and can all share experiences and expertise with each other," said Johnson. "This is about giving all Sailors the opportunity to excel."

To learn more about U.S. Coast Guard certification opportunities, log onto Navy Knowledge Online at www.nko.navy.mil and visit the Center for Surface Operations page. 

Story by JO1 Jd Walter, who is assigned to the public affairs office, Naval Personnel Development Command.

Twin Brothers Take Honors at SOY Boards

Two California-based Sailors learned that they were selected as their respective commands' 2003 Sailors of the Year (SOY) recently upon their return from holiday stand down.

Electronics Technician 1st Class (SS) Keir Harris, Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach Det. San Diego, and his fraternal twin brother, Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF) Kerry Harris, Naval Survival Training Institute (NSTI) Miramar, edged out several competitors within their respective commands to earn the prestigious title.

Both Sailors, from West Monroe, La., said they felt a lot of self-pride and credited each other for their accomplishments.

Before leaving on a plane to win the Naval Operational Medicine Institute (NOMI) SOY title in Pensacola, Fla., the second step in his quest to claim Shore Sailor of the Year, Kerry said his brother handed him some much-needed information.

"He showed up at the airport at 5 a.m. and handed me a binder full of notes on potential questions they could ask at the board," Kerry said.

Kerry opened the binder on the plane and found information concerning the Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO) Guidance for 2004 and Sea Power 21. Luckily for Kerry, he studied the notes. Among the questions he was asked at the board were: If he was the CNO and was addressing Congress, how would he spell out the next two years? He responded with answers pertaining to the papers his brother gave him.

"I didn't have any idea on that, and he brought me the whole shebang," said Kerry. "He really hooked me up."

Ultimately, the brothers could square off against each other later this year during the Shore Sailor of the Year competition.

"If we meet at the Shore Sailor of the Year board, I don't know if I would return the favor," joked Kerry.

If Keir wins his next contest at Navy Region Southwest, he would then proceed to the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Commander, Naval Installations boards. Upon winning there, Keir would be eligible for Vice CNO Shore Sailor of the Year. Kerry needs to win the Naval Medical Education and Training Command and Bureau of Naval Medicine boards.

"If that happens, (Kerry) is the one that's going to need a corpsman," laughed Keir, adding that if it did come to a family showdown, it would be extremely tough to oust his brother. "He is very motivated, and his military bearing is just outstanding."

The brothers, the youngest of eight children, come from a military-oriented background, starting with their father, who served in the Army during World War II, and two older brothers that served in the Air Force. Having that background has helped fuel their desire to serve.

Kerry enlisted in the Army in 1988 before joining the Navy in 1990, while Keir joined the Marine Corps and was honorably discharged in 1995. Keir joined the Navy the following summer.

Keir's duties at his present command include transportation officer, LAN administrator, command fitness leader, training coordinator and explosives certifications. He arrives at work early each morning, making sure things are in order before the day begins.

"He puts in way more hours than I do," said Kerry. "I get in

Time Capsule

This month we look back in the *All Hands* archive to see what was going on in the month of February. To view these issues in more detail on the Web, go to www.news.navy.mil/allhands.asp?x=search



May 1958 — 46 years ago

The underlying theme of this month's *All Hands* was "People to People." Based on a message from Commander 6th Fleet to every officer and enlisted man in that command, the aim of the program was, "to build a massive program of communication between Americans and the citizens of other

lands." While remaining at the peak of combat readiness, the Navy rescued the crew of a steamship, held parties for underprivileged children, participated in international sports competitions, held blood bank donations for foreign blood banks, played band concerts around the world, delivered babies in foreign countries and generally lived up to their nickname, "The Friendly Fleet."



May 1976 — 28 years ago

As reflected on the cover, basic training went coed at U.S. Naval Training Station Orlando, Fla. USS *Bolster* (ARS 38) accompanied two former U.S. coastal minesweepers, *Warbler* (MSC 206) and *Vireo* (MSC 205), to Suva, Fiji. The two mine-

sweepers became the first two ships of the Fijian Navy and were recommissioned as HMFS *Kiro* and HMFS *Kula*. We also interviewed the Navy Surgeon General VADM Donald L. Custis and featured a photographic look at Navy medicine.



May 1988 — 16 years ago

All Hands visited San Diego, "the Navy town known as America's finest city." In 1988 active-duty, retired and Navy civilian families made up one-fifth of all residents in San Diego County; and of all Sailors and Marines on active duty servicewide,

are one in five were stationed there. We also looked at Ward C, the maternity ward at Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif. Suicide prevention and the myths and facts associated with suicide were also discussed.

about 6, 6:30 a.m.; he's already at work at 4 a.m. He still has that Marine mentality: arrive early and go home late. He sets the

example." Kerry's duties at the Aviation Survival Training Center, which falls under NSTI, involves being

Ricky's Tour


By JO2 Mike Jones

www.rickystour.com



a physiology technician and safety swimmer, teaching aviation life support systems, survival, first aid and parachute descent procedures.

While the two excel at their jobs during working hours, setting the example for their junior Sailors and others doesn't stop at the end of the day. The brothers coach teams for a Tierrasanta youth football league and don't mind taking the time to speak with others about the benefits the Navy has to offer.

"We're Sailors 24 hours a day," said Keir, "both in uniform and out." 

Story by Journalist 2nd Class David Van Scoy, Navy Region Southwest Public Affairs

Navy NASCAR Team Experiences Boot Camp

NASCAR Driver Casey Atwood and the Navy NASCAR Team experienced Navy boot camp recently, during a visit to the Recruit Training Command (RTC) Great Lakes.

Navy car No. 14 co-owner Armando Fitz, of FitzBradshaw racing, crew chief Jay Guy and other members of the pit crew accompanied Atwood.

"The Navy's sponsorship is different because I've gotten to do so many different things, like spending 24 hours on a submarine and going on an aircraft carrier," Atwood said. "Coming here was a chance to look at the recruits' first steps toward getting to that submarine or carrier."

Guy, crew chief of the Navy NASCAR team, was presented with a chief's anchor cover device by the chief petty officers at RTC.

"As the crew chief of the car, they thought it would be appropriate if I wore a chief insignia.

This (the Navy sponsorship) is something to be proud of; our team is representing hundreds of thousands of Sailors—men and women around the world," Guy said.

The NASCAR Navy team experienced several boot camp training scenarios as a part of their visit.

After just two hours of sleep, the crew reported to the Dive Motivators, where they attempted to pass the initial physical screening for special programs, such as SEALs, Special Warfare Combatant Craft Crewmen, Diver and Explosive Ordnance Disposal programs.

The crew continued their tour of RTC with breakfast at the galley and a pit crew competition at Pacific Fleet Drill Hall. Two teams of RTC Staff, instructed by the Navy NASCAR Team, competed changing tires in a pit stop scenario for best time. The winning RTC Staff at the dual tire change wrenched out a best time in 34.55 seconds.

RTC staff gave the crew an opportunity to appreciate gas masks in the confidence chamber. The Navy NASCAR Team suited up in Navy coveralls and gas masks to endure the same experience that recruits go through.

"One of the important things they were talking about was trusting what the gas mask really does," said Fitz. He explained the similarity of trust that if his driver says to his crew chief that there is something going on with the car, he has to trust that the crew chief is going to take care of it.

Staff also trained the crew in recruit fashion on the M-9 pistol, shotgun and the M-16 assault rifle. Staff focused on the accuracy of the crew, and Atwood impressed onlookers with a 98 percent accuracy using the M-16.

The team was able to observe portions of Battle Stations and



Photo by Photographer's Mate 1st class Michael Worner.

Recruit Division Commander (RDC) HT1 Class Duane Dominick practices being the "jackman" prior to the "pit stop" competition aboard Recruit Training Command (RTC) Great Lakes. The Navy NASCAR Team, featuring Casey Atwood, visited Naval Station Great Lakes to experience Recruit Training and were the special guests at a recent graduation review.

participate in the Navy ballcap ceremony, where they were given Navy ball caps with "Drive Navy" embroidered on the back.

They continued on the tour to see recruit in-processing and attend the recruit graduation ceremony in the Midway Ceremonial Drill Hall, and signed autographs for students in "A" School training at the Naval Station Student Exchange.

The Navy NASCAR Team learned at the graduation how recruit divisions earn flags for their strengths as a team. Atwood stated that this year the team is going to earn flags too...checkered ones.

Atwood and the Navy NASCAR Team opened their season Feb. 14 at Daytona International Speedway.

Story by JOSN Elijah Leinaar who is assigned to the Naval Service Training Command/Naval Station Great Lakes public affairs.

HST Artifacts to Inspire Future Leaders

Keeping its legacy alive for future generations of midshipmen to observe, USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) donated artifacts no longer of use to its mission to the Drydock Club at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

The club is a common area for midshipmen to enjoy snacks and to get away from the daily grind.

According to LT Sly Brown of *Harry S. Truman's* Supply Department, donations from ships can range from command media tools, such as pictures and graphics, to actual pieces of the ship itself.

"They want basically anything from the ship," said Brown. "They've had people give them ejector seats, steering wheels, pictures, arresting gear cables and so on."

Brown surveyed the depart-

ment heads on board and compiled a list of ideas for donations.

"We sent a couple of pictures, the mosaic of our pictures from the deployment and an arresting gear socket," said Brown.

The mosaic is an arrangement of tiny multi-colored photographs that form the image of President Harry Truman.

Totaling approximately 1,500 miniscule pictures in all, the mosaic was compiled during Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. Brown said the arresting gear socket is similar to that which the captain shows distinguished visitors in his in-port cabin.

The ship's donation is a small part of the overall decorating effort for the midshipmen's favorite relaxation spot. Brown said the donation helps improve HST's reputation with representation in the Navy's prestigious leadership school.

"It allows the midshipmen at the Academy to know the Truman name is out there," said Brown. "A few other ships have

done it, and there will be more to follow, but this assures that when people walk by, they can say "the *Truman* supports the Academy."

Commanding Officer Capt. Michael R. Groothousen, who attended the Naval Academy and whose son will graduate in a few months, said most of the donations are pieces and parts of the ship that are not needed anymore.

"We've collected various paraphernalia," said Groothousen. "We've got T-2 holdbacks, since we shot the last ever off HST, so that's something of an historical nature."

Artifacts from Operation *Iraqi Freedom* such as float coats worn by Sailors on the flight deck and arresting gear cables are even more valuable for donation, he added. "We're not talking things of value or things the ship is paying for, but rather things of an historical nature for the midshipmen to look at and learn more about our naval heritage."



Photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class John L. Beeman

Tug boats guide USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) up the Elizabeth River, to the Norfolk Naval Shipyard to begin a planned incremental availability.

Shipmates



Quartermaster 3rd Class (SW) Eric Childers was recently named USS *Ashland* (LSD 48) Junior Sailor of the Year 2003. The Gastonia, N.C., native was cited for his superior performance as quartermaster of the watch, training petty officer, work center supervisor, and divisional repair/supply petty officer. Childers also volunteered to revamp the entire training petty officer program within the division. He researched lesson-training guides, developed a short and long range training plan, and implemented weekly training that has significantly raised the level of knowledge within the division.


"It's great for us," said LT. Mark Symmes, Naval Academy food service and contracting officer. "Right now, we have plain white walls with mostly just sports pictures, not many special donations with a story behind them."

Symmes added that HST's donation gives midshipmen more

to think about with regard to the history of the service. "Now there will be a greater awareness of the Navy's heritage."

"The Naval Academy is a repository of a lot of our naval heritage, so being that *Truman* played such a big part in the war, I wanted to make sure we get some stuff up there."

Groothousen said the Drydock Club was last remodeled when he attended the Academy, so whatever HST sends will remain there for a good long time.

HST's efforts will help to preserve the ship's image and memory for future generations of naval officers, many of whom may one day walk her decks. 

Story by Journalist Seaman John Stevens, USS Harry S. Truman Public Affairs

► **There are plenty of reasons** people may want to live in Paris, but the Metro system may be the best kept secret. Here, IS1 Patrick Overstreet, an operations assistant assigned to the American Embassy, Paris uses the Metro as the primary means to get to and from work.

Sailor Diplomats

Story and photos by JO1(SCW/SS) James G. Pinsky

What if you could score shore duty in places like Paris, London, Tokyo or Santiago, Chile, locations that most people could only dream about visiting let alone live in? Better yet, what if your shore duty in one of these dream cities propelled you to the top of American diplomacy by awarding you the opportunity to work hand in hand with America's ambassadors, leaders of foreign militaries and learn a new language to boot? Meet Chief Supply Clerk Kirk Flint.

Flint is an operations assistant assigned to DOD Attaché Office (DAO) as the operations coordinator (OPSCO) for U.S. Ambassador Stephen D. Mull, the U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania.

As a chief petty officer, Flint is used to shouldering a lot of responsibility, but the demands of working in an American embassy are different.

"The DAO does at least two things that are important to the United States and Lithuania," said Mull. "Obviously, it connects our two militaries, so it's important that we know each other, work well together and 'talk the same language' in planning and executing military missions. In addition, the DAO is our action office for such things as aircraft clearances for the U.S. government planes that frequently fly into Lithuania, the arrival and departure of official delegations, visits of U.S. government officials to military sites or exercises and so on."

Flint said his job is more than just serving as a liaison for the Lithuanians; he's a friendly face and welcome voice to visiting Americans.

"I'm an American's warm, fuzzy blanket here in a foreign land," said Flint.

Flint, as the OPSCO, is tasked with managing the operations assistants within the American embassy and works directly for the defense attaché. Since Lithuania is so small, Flint handles all of the operations assistant and coordinator roles for the American embassy. He is typically the first person Americans meet when they step off the plane in Lithuania's capital city, Vilnius. In fact, making travel easier is what Flint does best as an OPSCO.

"Our relationship with the Lithuanian airport in Vilnius is my proudest accomplishment," said Flint. "We can get Americans in

and out of the airport faster than anyone else, and for anyone who travels internationally, having someone who knows how to deal with the host nation's customs and regulations as well as our DAO here does, makes all the difference in the world."

Along with a hearty handshake and a quick trip through customs, Flint is the resident expert for Americans visiting Lithuania. He speaks the language, knows the country, can recommend where to stay, is familiar with the local laws, knows what places to avoid—and even where to get the best deals on Lithuanian souvenirs.

Whether Flint is greeting American delegates, coordinating multinational military maneuvers, or translating Lithuanian for an air crew trying to get their aircraft fixed, his significance is felt all the way to the top

► **Working as an operations assistant** has plenty of advantages, like being able to experience foreign cultures and view beautiful scenery like this walkway in Vilnius, Lithuania.



Sailor Diplomats

▲ **SKC Kirk Flint**, the operations coordinator for the Defense Attache Office, Lithuania, discusses an upcoming military exercise with Lithuania's Chief of Naval Operations. Because of the nature of Flint's job, he routinely works with top-level military and political officials.

◀ **Navy operations assistants**, who work directly for host country American ambassadors as military liaisons, must learn to speak the country's primary language, perform at a diplomatic level, survive on the local economy and blend in to the local culture to be effective and trusted liaisons. For SKC Kirk Flint, the operations coordinator for Lithuania, part of his blending means using the local mass transit like this electric bus in Lithuania's capital city of Vilnius.

The operations assistant special program is available to qualified enlisted ratings: intelligence specialists, yeomen, storekeepers and personnelmen. To apply for the program the following prerequisites must be met to enter the screening process conducted by IS, Special Programs and CTA detailers.

All applicants:

- must be E-5 and above, and their immediate family members must be U.S. citizens.
- cannot have any relatives in the host country to which they are applying.
- must be able to pass a top secret security clearance investigation (SCI), a command screening for special programs, an overseas screening and a financial screening.

If applicants meet these requirements, they should submit a package of the following:

- Your last three evaluations, medical and dental screenings.
- a list of all of your duty stations, awards and if you passed the Navy typing test.
- your command's endorsement of your selection to special programs, and
- a minimum score of 100 on the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB).

If family members are involved, they will have to pass a medical screening, fill out and pass an electronic personnel security questionnaire and submit family photos. Once the application is complete, the package should be sent to your detailee. The Office of Naval Intelligence reviews the package and determines if the candidate is acceptable.

If you are selected to enter the operations assistant training pipeline you are sent to Washington, D.C., for formal training which includes a nine-week operations assistant course, a two-week operations coordinator course (for applicable billets) and language training. Only then will you be sent to your new duty station.

I'm trained to blend into the French culture enough to effectively communicate the American interests to the French."

"I think I have it pretty good," said Overstreet. "I get to go home every night to my wife, Rebecca, and home is Paris, France." The Overstreets like Paris so much that they felt comfortable enough to have their first child there.

While being married is certainly not a prerequisite for being an operations assistant, couples like the Overstreets succeed on foreign soil as a team because that's exactly how the Navy trains them before they deploy. That's right, the Navy trains your spouse.

"This is the only job I know about, but there may be others, that trains your spouse in culture and etiquette," said Overstreet. "They taught Rebecca things like, how you behave at a meal, the way you look, walk and even how to talk to a shopkeeper and communicate ideas to the French."

In addition to culture and etiquette, the Navy teaches spouses to speak the host nation's primary language.

According to ISC Kim Michael, attaché affairs chief for the Office of Naval Intelligence, the Navy expects a lot more from spouses than most Navy jobs.

"Anyone applying for the operations assistant job with family members needs to be aware that the family must go through the same security checks and top secret security clearance investigation as the candidates," said Michael.

After all, according to Michael, wherever the Sailors are, so are their family members, so the security concerns are the same.

According to Michael, there are other benefits if

► **Les Invalides** comprises the largest single collection of monuments in Paris including: Musée de l'Armé, Musée des Plans-Reliefs, Musée de l'Ordre de la Libération and L'Eglise de St-Louis-des-Invalides.

Sailor Diplomats

► **Operations assistants** like Overstreet work in the American embassy and serve as an important link between our government and those of the host nation.



▼ **Paris is the city of lights** for good reason.



you're an operations assistant including: some billets count as sea duty; you may receive special duty assignment pay or language pay (if applicable); there's a civilian clothes allowance; complete immersion in a foreign culture as an education; small offices with short chains of command. For applicants with family members, spouses attend language and spouse training. In most cases government quarters are provide; and all children receive fully-funded educations through DOD, usually at the best schools in the country.

Ambassador Mull offered the following insight into why a Sailor may want to choose embassy duty:

"An OPSCO's position offers a lot of variety in who you work with and how, more than on most bases," said Mull. "I think OPSCOs get a chance to broaden their skills and their experience, for onward assignments or for positions after they retire from the Navy. It's also a chance to live abroad with the benefits of being part of an American community, so it's not too alien, and to work with and live among the local population, so it's more challenging and exciting. And, while many Sailors might prefer to be at sea, sometimes it's time to stay on dry land for a while," Mull added." **IS**

Pinsky is a photojournalist who is assigned to All Hands.

▼ **IS1 Patrick Overstreet** and his wife, Rebecca, shop for their first baby at a Parisian toy store.



▼ **Most of the year** Rota is a quiet fisherman's town. When summer comes around, this small city becomes overpopulated with tourists.

Pearls of the Mediterranean

Rota, Spain

Story by JOC(SW) Dan Smithyman,
photos by PH3 Antoine Themistocleous

Rota, Spain, is known by a lot of names: "Gateway to the Mediterranean," "the Florida of Europe," and is considered by Navy leaders as one of the Pearls of Mediterranean—the others being Naples, Italy, and Sigonella, Sicily.

Located midway between the famous Rock of Gibraltar and the Portugese border on the Atlantic Ocean, Sailors' attraction to Rota is varied: nine months of sunny weather, travel opportunities, a rich Spanish culture

and the benefits of living and working in a relatively small military community.

"Geographically, this base is really convenient, because you can walk right out the gate and there's somewhere to go, something to do and somewhere to eat," said Kimberly Meza, a Navy spouse and volunteer at Navy Marine Corps Relief Society.

But others like to venture further outside the confines of the naval station.



“We enjoy spending time off base,” said Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW) James VanCleave, who has spent his last three years as the career counselor for U.S. Naval Hospital Rota. “We are in pursuit of those things that are “must sees” like Alhambra, Malaga, Granada, Spain and others. We just got back from London, and we’ve been to Budapest, Hungary, Barcelona, Spain, and other places. This is a good jumping-off point to other destinations in Europe.”

Traveling throughout Spain, and indeed Europe, is not without its challenges. For some, foreign currency is confusing, as are hotels and transportation, but for others, it’s the numerous languages.

“The language barrier can be a challenge. I can’t even count the number of times I’ve ordered off a menu and received something completely different than what I thought, but we just write that up as a cultural experience and try to enjoy whatever it is the waiter brought us,” VanCleave said.

The language barrier notwithstanding, sightseeing and touring the countryside is a favorite pastime among singles and families stationed in Rota. Throughout the year, tourist activities co-mingle with typical Spanish customs. There are bullfighting seasons, religious festivals and sightseeing trips that include castles, cathedrals, flamenco dancing, Roman and Moorish architecture and the running of the bulls. The area is also a principle locale for olive groves and vineyards.

Some people debate whether Spain is better for the service member, or for the children many of them bring along.

“We send a little league baseball team to Poland each year,” said VanCleave. “We also send the high school athletic teams to England and Germany to participant in tournaments. What a fantastic opportunity for our kids to see and do some to the things available here.”

“As a single parent, I like to stay on base

with my three-year-old daughter, Kari,” added Personnelman 2nd Class Jennifer Yee of Personnel Support Detachment Rota. “We like to go to the duck pond, ride bikes and get ice cream at Baskin Robbins. The base has stuff happening year-round. We have fairs, and celebrations, National Night Out, bike rodeos and lots of stuff.”

The conveniences and perks afforded to the 6,000 Americans on base are increasing with Rota’s “Vision 21,” an extensive improvement project to recapitalize the aging infrastructure on base. Some of the projects include a \$19 million security complex, with the consolidation and upgrade of existing security and emergency services facilities; a \$22 million command operations

headquarters; improved transient bachelor enlisted quarters; and a signed memorandum of understanding to begin construction for a new \$32 million Navy Exchange and Commissary mall complex. The Department of Defense Dependents School is also scheduled to open its new state-of-the-art elementary school and some of the new high school facilities in the summer.

This small base, with the neighboring village of Rota, provides an exciting backdrop for single Sailors or families, and offers a unique opportunity for Sailors to grow, both personally and professionally. **SS**

Smithyman is a journalist assigned to the public affairs office, Rota, Spain.

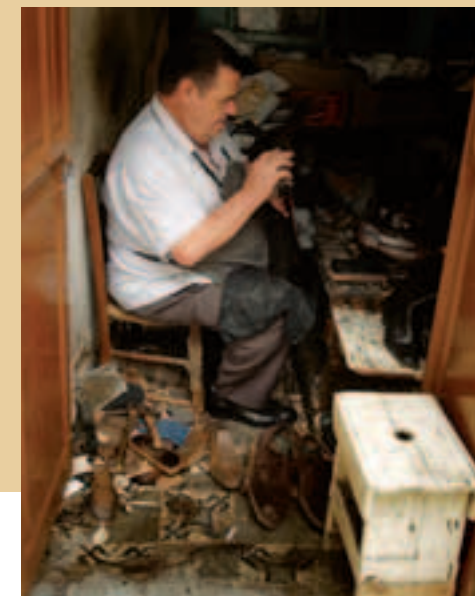


◀ **“I absolutely love** the beaches here in Spain. During the summer it is packed with people, because Rota is totally a summer town and a lot of people spend their vacations here. But my favorite time is at fall and winter, when the beach is deserted. I just find it so peaceful,” said HM3 Katie McKeehan, who is up for orders but wishes that she could stay in Rota.

▶ **LT Kevin Juntunen**, resident officer in charge of construction (ROICC), consults with the project engineering inspector, Ramon Borreguero, about the underway construction of the new elementary school. This is the beginning of what they say is going to be a whole different base by 2010.



ALL HANDS • www.news.navy.mil



▲ **Scenes like these symbolize** the old charm of Europe, where old customs get passed from generation to generation. The pride of good quality work is still more appreciated than mass production.

▼ **Another beautiful sunset** along the coast of southern Spain. Duty in Europe is the perfect setting for romance, adventure, and a chance to experience different cultures that make interesting stories for the people back home.



▼ **Sailors in Naples** are treated with mountain views when looking to sea, such as this view of Mt. Vesuvius overlooking the Gulf of Naples.

Pearls of the Mediterranean

Naples, Italy

Story by JOCS James Slater,
Photos by PH3 Antoine Themistocleous

For centuries, Naples' central location in both Italy and the Mediterranean has made it a center of trade, travel and culture. From ancient times to today, a visit to ancient Pompeii, a row through the blue grotto on the island of Capri or a climb up Mt. Vesuvius have been enticing experiences for visitors. For members of the U.S. military community at Naples, Italy, those "once-in-a-lifetime opportunities are easy weekend trips.

While Naval Support Activity (NSA) Naples has been saddled with a reputation for quality-of-life challenges, these days, all that's changing. With its multi-year improvement project nearing completion, NSA Naples has been resuscitated. *Napoli*, a derivative of the Greek *Neopolis* means "new city;" and Naples—the new city—has a new reputation.

Having moved its activities from its previous location in Agnano's crater, (with its exposed sulfur vent), NSA Naples now boasts an east side locale with a view. Overlooking the city of Naples, NSA now

enjoys a view of Mt. Vesuvius and shares facilities with its new neighbor on Naples' east side, Capodichino airport.

Choices of duty in Naples are plentiful. NSA Naples' facilities support more than 100 tenant commands in the Naples area, supporting missions of U.S. and NATO aircraft, command administration and communication support for the nearly 3,000 people who work at Capodichino.

"It's improved as far as quality of life for the Sailors," said Yeoman 1st Class Jeanice Vitali, who first served a tour of duty in Naples in the early 1990s. "It's just much cleaner and more family-oriented than before. It's a much better place to be stationed now."

Vitali's husband, Cryptologist Technician 3rd Class Jim Vitali, agrees that Naples duty has improved. "It's a lot different now," he said. "I think the driving is better. The police are better—everything like that. They're definitely up to speed to where we are in the United States."

New housing and support facilities have

been built on the edge of the Campania region's farmlands, a 20-minute drive north-east of Capodichino at the U.S. Navy Support Site in Gricignano. With more than 800 units for family housing, the support site is also home to the Department of Defense Dependent Schools elementary and high schools, where children have the opportunity to experience a safe and productive learning environment. The site also houses Naval Hospital Naples and many more support services that offer improved quality of life.

"When I first got here, it was my first duty station, so I didn't know what to expect," said YNSN Kevin Braga, a Naples Security Force member now on year three of his Naples tour. "When I first came here to Gricignano, there was no hospital. There were housing complexes, but it was nowhere near the size it is now. It's beautiful now. It's like paradise. There's a whole new landscape that you can see from miles away. It's the only place in Naples that has this much light [at night]."

▼ **Food is a big part** of any Italian gathering. So the Vitalis make sure to serve typical Italian food like mozzarella along with hot dogs for those with more American tastes when having friends over.



Pearls of the Mediterranean

Naples, Italy

◀ **Basilica di San Francesco di Paola** built by architect Pietro Bianchi in 1817, stands across King Ferdinand's palace, Palazzo Reale. The king asked for this church to be built to complement the view from his suite, because he did not want to be reminded of how the poor lived in the neighborhood behind it.

Central to the support site and the construction project, the Naples Improvement Initiative, a new four-story Navy Lodge greets newcomers to Naples with state-of-the-art facilities and consolidated convenience, alleviating the need to make separate trips to shop at the exchange, the commissary or even process a vehicle.

Soon, shopping, vehicle processing, schools—in fact almost all support services will be within walking distance of one another, as well as the Navy Lodge, an important factor for those transitioning in or out of the community with few transportation options. A regular shuttle

bus connects the support site with all other military facilities in Naples.

The support site was built above an ancient Roman crossroad. Although Italian historical preservation laws forbid the building of structures above such remains, the construction of roads above the Roman roads is permissible. A hand-laid brick walkway now bisects the support site, covering the Roman roadway. A well that provided water to the road's travelers is preserved on the ground floor of what is now Naval Hospital Naples.

In addition to newer, centrally located facilities, the base's educational community

has been able to use new college programs to expand opportunities to pursue a college degree in Naples. Both resident and visiting professors offer flexible programs that make earning a degree on active duty possible. Last year, more than 140 students from the Naples military community earned their degrees, ranging from associates to graduate degrees.

But schooling for adults is not all to weigh when considering education in Naples. Both the elementary and high schools bus students from throughout the Naples and neighboring Gaeta areas. Many families also take the opportunity to enroll their

youngsters in Italian pre-school.

"The key to enjoying a successful tour lies in remembering that living in Italy is not like living in the United States," said Journalist 1st Class Eileen Kelly-Fors. "Housing and apartments are constructed differently; electric power and utilities are different; shopping and driving are different; the pizza and the coffee are different."

Quality-of-life improvements, both in facilities and service, have provided duty in Naples with a new face. That is not to imply that duty in Naples—even with its face-lift—isn't without its challenges.

Language barriers, cultural differences, limited spouse employment opportunities and relative isolation from life and family in the United States are issues shared by many overseas assignments. Additionally, new facilities make it possible to remain

isolated within the American military community. It's possible to work, live and shop entirely on U.S. facilities, but to do so would be to miss rare cross-cultural opportunities that serve a foundation for a successful overseas experience.

For Kelly-Fors, one of the most interesting aspects of a Naples tour are the Neapolitans themselves.

"Neapolitans have a character all their own. They constantly talk using arm and hand movements that animate their conversations and emphasize viewpoints," she said. "You may often feel that you're in the middle of a family quarrel or a comic opera while ordering morning coffee."

"You can't beat it," said Jim Vitale who chose to live off base in the Italian community. "I mean you can see it, and we have the pictures to prove it. Look at how

we are living here. We have our two children here; we have beautiful neighbors and our landlords are awesome."

Braga, who plays in a soccer league with Italian teammates agrees and recommends an attempt at basic Italian as a first step. "The Italians will always help you. If you deal with them and expect them to speak only English, they'll be a little hesitant. When you try to work with them in Italian, they'll help you along.

True to its name, the "new city" of Naples inspires envy in visitors who are not assigned; surprises previously assigned visitors; and extends a welcoming hand to those ready for the unique challenges and rewards of their first assignment in Naples. 🇮🇹

Slater is the managing editor for All Hands.

► **Navy officials in Naples** have worked hard over the last several years to improve sailors' quality of life. Among those improvements was the building of a new naval hospital, replacing the one that rested on Vesuvius' volcanic crater.



► **Children play Europe's** most popular sport, soccer, in the Piazza del Plebisto.



► **Fabio, a Napoli native**, tries to persuade some Italians to come and join him and his American friends. PH3(SW) Lenny Francioni, the one wearing the cowboy hat, likes the attention he gets from the Italians.



▼ **Boats decorated** with multicolored stripes crowd the small harbor of the tiny La Provincia. The little town's piers transform into a lively fish market on Sundays.

Pearls of the Mediterranean

Sigonella, Sicily

Story by JO1 Craig Coleman,
Photos by PH3 Antoine Themistocleous

At Naval Air Station (NAS) Sigonella, Sicily, everything old is new again. The "Hub of the Med," divided into a services and quality-of-life base (NAS I) and an operational base (NAS II), is in the midst of a \$750 million recapitalization project that is making Sigonella an even better place to live and work.

NAS Sigonella seems to be erecting new buildings as quickly as the orange groves that surround the base sprout new trees. The centerpiece of the ongoing construction is the Navy Exchange/DECA commissary and food court. Completed in 2001, the 1,500 square meter facility makes it possible to stock a greater variety of products and foods.

The new dining facility-club offers patrons new lunchtime and after-work entertainment options, while the new administration building relocates previously

scattered customer service offices in a single building. A new chapel and community building improve worship opportunities, and provide a new place for professional and social organization meetings. A new kindergarten was added to the Department of Defense Dependent School (DODDS), and more than 500 new housing units opened recently near NAS II.

"There is construction all over the place," said Thea Burke. Senior Chief Aviation Warfare Systems Operator (AW) Jim Burke, Thea and their two sons arrived 18 months ago, just after the opening of the exchange/commissary complex. "There is transformation going on all the time. The facilities at the school are improving; the roads are constantly being upgraded," added the senior chief.

Pearls of the Mediterranean

Sigonella, Sicily



▲ **All the construction** being done at NAS Sigonella has provided jobs for the local Italians. There are places around the base that are only supported by the Americans who are stationed in Sigonella.

▼ **Even on country roads** outside city limits, you will run into some traffic. Sigonella sheep and goat herders often move their flocks across roads just off the base.



▼ **New barracks built** at NAS Sigonella, along with many other new facilities, have improved Sailors' quality of life.



The final phase of the recapitalization project is a \$26 million Morale, Welfare and Recreation complex. The facilities, scheduled for completion in 2005, include a multiplex cinema, a heated outdoor swimming pool, a 10-lane bowling center, a video arcade and more.

But base facilities are only part of the story of a tour at Sigonella. The Mediterranean architecture of NAS I and NAS II, with its red tile roofs and pastel walls, is in harmony with the environment and suggests the island's history. You can find everything here, from Baroque opera houses to discotheques, from olive groves to water parks. With 1,000 miles of beaches and a 5,000 ft. volcano—Mt. Etna—looming in the background, Sigonella is a base with sunbathing and skiing nearby, modern amenities and ancient artifacts, plus mild weather and friendly people.

"The spice of life is diversity, and here there's a lot of spice," said Aviation Warfare Systems Operator (NAC) 1st Class Scott Williams, who's been stationed at NAS Sigonella for three years.

As rewarding as a tour in Sicily can be,

it's not without challenges. The first hurdle usually faced by Sailors and their families is the language barrier. But like most barriers, it can be overcome with effort and the proper attitude.

"If you're willing to make mistakes and not get frustrated, they will embrace you as one of their own," said Thea, who does a lot of produce shopping in the local Italian markets. "You have to be willing to make mistakes (with the language). You've got to get up and try again, otherwise you'll find yourself locked in your house—and think of what you'll have missed."

The key to enjoying a tour in Sicily, as anywhere, is the ability to adapt to the environment. "You can't really imagine what it's going to be like before you're here, because it's so different," said Thea.

"We came here to adapt ourselves, to the Italian culture and lifestyle and to enjoy Sicily for what it has to offer," added Jim. "I would tell any Sailor, single or married, get a tour in overseas. It's just so rewarding."

Coleman is a journalist who is assigned to the public affairs office NAS Sigonella, Sicily.

◀ **In Cantania** there are unlimited souvenirs you can buy, but don't forget to do your shopping before or after "siesta time", which is usually mid-afternoon and early evening, where the stores close and locals spend time with family, napping or taking care of personal business.

▼ **Two old friends walk** back home from spending time at the old café, where in the middle of the day you would see a gang of old men sitting around talking and letting the time pass by slowly.



▲ **Situated in the middle** of Toiyabe National Forest, the training ground for the students provided amazing views, but little protection from the elements. "Because this is a national forest, said Instructor HMC(FMF/SW) Fredrick Madrid, "it's not unusual for our training to be interrupted by campers, hikers and snowmobilers.

Navy corpsmen practice survival instead of
medicine in the mountains of the Toiyabe
National Forest

Out of their

They never saw it coming—literally. By the time the explosions cracked the cold, quiet of the morning and smoked filled the spaces between the blinding snowflakes, the group's reaction was slow and numb. Usually calm and collected in the face of chaos, the team of doctors, physician's assistants (PA) and field medics found themselves confused; fumbling for any survival equipment they could put their hands on and scrambling down the mountainside for cover from the unexpected onslaught above.

Sniper fire and shouts bounced overhead. Gone were the warmth, comfort and predictability of their clinics and hospitals. Quite simply, they were out of their element.

It had become painfully clear to the participants that the Mountain Cold-Weather Medicine (MCWM) course they had signed up for had little to do with developing their medical expertise and everything to do with survival.

Encircled by the looming mountains peaks of the Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada, lies the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC). MCMWTC is a small, isolated training facility where Marines units and field medics come to experience mountaineering techniques and cold-weather combat operations on unforgiving terrain that ranges in elevation from 6,500 to 11,000 feet.

Normally the course is reserved for the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) corpsmen assigned to Marine Corps units that potentially face missions in extreme cold environments. But because of operational commitments, the two-week course has had more openings for doctors, PAs and nurses.

After a few lessons on equipment, land navigation and their equipment issue, the students moved out of the warm classroom and heated barracks and up into the mountains where their field exercises began.



The practioners-turned-students crammed their awkward 70-pound packs and themselves into noisy all-terrain vehicles for transport to their new high-altitude home for the next several days.

Once “on the hill,” the instructors, affectionately referred to as “Red Hats” because of their distinctive headgear, began lessons in setting up a base station and proper use of survival gear.

“A good majority of what these field medics will be required to do in the field is train others on how to properly use their gear. That’s the easiest way to prevent your troops’ injuries,” said Instructor HMC (SW/FMF) Michael Madrid. “This is a real challenge for some,” he added. “The elements and even your own gear can work against you if you don’t know how to use it properly. It’s imperative that they learn the basics to surviving up here if they are to be an asset to their attached unit, and not a hindrance.”

The group’s initial days in the field started deceptively warm and pleasant. Base camp was established in the warmth of the sun. After selecting a flat space camouflaged by evergreens, each four-person team dug out an area wide and deep enough to conceal their snow-white tent. Once the tents were up, waist-high trails were dug beginning at the entrance

▲ **As the students headed** downhill to their extraction point, a surprise ambush forced the group to dig in for yet another cold night in the field.

▼ **Weighing in at 93 pounds,** LT Ashley James of Naval Hospital, Camp Pendleton, Calif., carries close to her own body weight with the more than 70-pound backpack and gear.



Out of their

► **Small stoves were issued** to each group to melt snow for cooking and drinking, but the students quickly adapted them for personal warmth, as well. LTJG Edgar San Luis of Fleet Hospital, Camp Pendleton, Calif., patiently waits for the flame to settle to a constant level to thaw his icy fingers.



▼ **At the beginning** of the field exercises, the weather was sunny and almost warm. But conditions eventually deteriorated, as did the good humor of students LT Mark Morton and HM3 Joseph Reyez.



of each tent and running along the perimeter of the camp to conceal movement in the campsite.

The students were then divided into groups for skiing lessons based on their skill levels. During the afternoon of ski lessons, the students fell repeatedly and enjoyed a laugh or two at each other's expense. No one realized that shortly this wouldn't be such a laughing matter.

Even the first night in the field seemed comfortable enough with thick sleeping bags, full tanks of gas in their small cooking/heating stoves and plenty of water provided by the instructors.

During the next two days, students began to put their basic skills to use, while learning about avalanche conditions, search and rescue and evacuation transport techniques.

On the last morning of the first exercise, the rescue survivalists were broken into four teams to locate, stabilize and transport four injured men. Of course, the four largest students became the "victims," leaving their smaller teammates to push and pull their patients cross-country and uphill while carrying their survival packs,

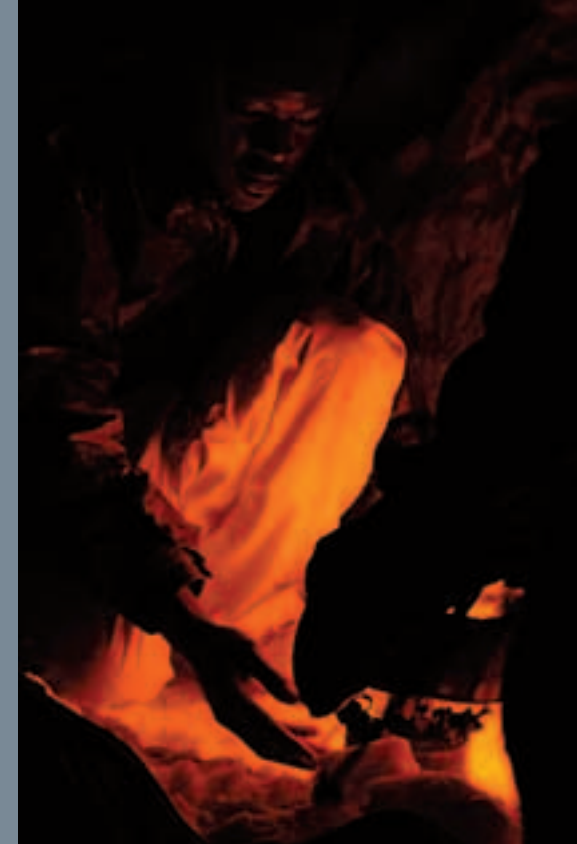
At 400-meter intervals along the timed course, teams stopped to set up warming tents with fires to keep their patient's body temperature up. Signs of frustration soon surfaced as instructors heard things like, "Are you pushing? We need a little help here.

Hey, when you get the warming station set up, you need to come back here and help! This is ridiculous," echoing across the wilderness.

After getting the victims to the end of the course, the students continued their training in downhill skiing. Then everyone moved back to the barracks for three days of downtime. For students, this provided a much-needed opportunity to wash the clothes everyone had been wearing for the last three days.

LT Ashley James, a PA at Camp Lejeune, N.C., took advantage of the downtime to get her laundry done and reflect on why she was there. "I fought hard to get in this course," James said, "but there have been times during this exercise that I wondered what I was thinking. At least I carried the same pack and gear as the rest of the group, and I was never the last one to arrive. That was a challenge I made to myself."

It wasn't long before her instructor challenged her again. "They just informed me that for the second field ex, I'm to be the battalion squad leader," said an anxious James. "I prefer to remain low-key and make small leadership decisions from behind the scenes. I guess they picked up on that. They told me they picked me because I was doing a good job. That's quite an honor, but couldn't they have just told me I was doing a good job?"



▲ "The stoves were so hard to ignite, that most of the time we'd just give up and go to sleep cold and hungry," said HM2 Mustafa Joseph of Naval Medical Center, San Diego. "Keeping our spirits up through the exercise was pretty difficult."

▼ Day or night, the survival students were forced to break down their base camp and relocate each time security was compromised.

Out of their



▲ On the final night in the field, students dug out ice caves to sleep in instead of erecting tents. "Believe it or not," said HM3 Matthew Thompson from 2nd Marine Division Camp Lejeune, N.C., "the night I slept in the ice cave was the most comfortable, warm night I spent in the field."



◀ After dragging patients uphill for an afternoon, HM3 Alexander Hopkins of 3rd Battalion, Twentynine Palms, Calif., stops in a moment of sheer exhaustion before pressing on toward the ski slope for lessons.



Back at a newly established base camp, a large triage area had been set up outside the main treatment tent to support a stream of incoming casualties. As each casualty arrived, they were placed next to the heating stove as field treatment was administered and evacuation routes were called in.

Because everyone on the exercise was a trained medical practitioner, it was up to the instructors to ensure focus stayed on the student's tactical training and survival skills.

The group remained in constant motion as calls poured in with more patients in dire need. As the students were beginning to find their patients in the dark, on a moonless night, they were informed around midnight that perimeter security had been breeched and they had to move their base camp. Tired and cold, they filled in the pathways throughout the camp, strapped on their packs and carefully navigated to a new. The transition took more than four hours.

As morning approached, the numb students continued with their triage treatments while looking forward to their return to the heated barrack later that day. Or so they thought.

"I figured out the toughest part was giving up control," said LCDR Joseph Penta. "Just when we would get a bearing on a situation, the instructors would throw us another curve. It was exhausting, but valuable training. We learned quickly that it wasn't about the medicine so much as surviving in an extreme environment."


On their way back from camp, the students were met by sniper fire as they rounded a corner in their all terrain vehicle. James shouted for the students to, "Take cover."

After the attack was suppressed by security forces, the students learned they were to spend an additional, unexpected night outdoors—this time in snow caves they would have to build themselves. Irritable, cold and exhausted, the group resigned themselves to the task and set to work,

once again shoveling the snow that served as both their enemy, and protector. Surprisingly, once dug in and settled in their icy creations, the students found the insulation the snow provided made their caves warmer than their tents.

While none of the students seemed to enjoy the constant cold and hunger, most learned to adapt and overcome.

"I think it's import that we learn to practice adversity, and even a little misery," reflected HMC(SW/FMF) Michael Thompson. "My fingers hurt so bad that, at times, I just wanted to say, 'Enough.' But, you learn that you can go on, and that's extremely important. When we're operational, we don't have the luxury of saying, 'I'm too cold, so I'm not going to do this anymore.' I think all medical personnel should experience this—you never know when you might need it."

Perhaps the individuals who participated may never need to call on the skills acquired during their time at MCMWTC, but to the real patient waiting for help in the cold and bleeding in the snow, it can mean the difference between life and death. After all, the lifesavers can't save lives if they can't save themselves. 

Darby is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.



▲ **The small tents**, while keeping the snow off at night, did little to keep students warm. Each morning, the students arose to find the inside of their tents frosted with ice crystals from their breathing. Here, Instructors HM2(FMF) Michael Fanning and LT Matt McKlinko prepare for a new day of field operations.

► **LT Keith Thompson inspects** HN Andrew Graff's fingers for possible frostbite. Fortunately for Graff, his fingers were just extremely stiff and cold, not frostbitten.



▼ **HM3 Joseph Rayez** and HM3 Matthew thompson pause halfway up the hillslope until conflicting orders on where to take cover are resolved.



◀ **At the conclusion** of their field exercises, students spent the following morning checking their gear back into supply prior to graduation.

Straighten

Up and Smile Right

Laughing heartily with wide, toothy grins is something most people take for granted. But, for those with dental deficiencies, baring their pearly whites can be a source of embarrassment and anxiety.

Fortunately for those so afflicted, Navy dental technicians (DT) such as DTDN Patrick McCurdy are giving the gift of laughter.

McCurdy, currently assigned to the prosthodontic division, National Naval Dental Center (NNDC), Bethesda, Md., finds great satisfaction in helping to restore missing smiles.

"Once people have new teeth, they're not intimidated by their smile anymore," said McCurdy. "They want to show off their new teeth. It's a great feeling to know you helped restore someone's confidence."

From crowns and bridges to implants and even total mouth reconstructions, the dentists and technicians at NNDC are spreading

smiles one mouth at a time. In his clinical capacity, McCurdy prepares each patient before the dentist arrives by explaining the procedures and taking dental impressions of their teeth. "Taking an impression is the first step in the restoration process," McCurdy said. "It helps ensure the proper fit of the new piece."

Because many of the dentists at NNDC Bethesda are in their residencies, the staff sees a wide range of dental deformities. But the learning environment also mandates more appointments and fittings per patient to ensure the proper fit of artificial teeth.

"We've seen some pretty severe cases," McCurdy continued. "I've seen instances where a patient received as many as 18 implants, where screws are surgically inserted into the jaw and a false tooth is then attached to the post. A typical implant case might call for one or two. This clinic takes on some major reconstructions to fully prepare our residents for what they may encounter out in the field."

For McCurdy, dentistry isn't just a 9-to-5 job either. It's his 24-7 long-term goal. "I love doing this type of work," said McCurdy. "I'm not sure at this point whether or not I'll stay in prosthodontic care, but I'm definitely pursuing a career in Navy dentistry."

Besides taking night courses toward his degree, McCurdy volunteers time at schools in the community, teaching proper dental hygiene habits to local children.

When asked what pearls of wisdom he would pass along to his fellow shipmates to maintain bright, healthy smiles, McCurdy chuckled and referred to the familiar.

"I know this probably sounds completely corny, but brush and floss daily," he said with a grin. "Also, schedule regular check-ups. No one should be afraid to visit the dentist's office. We're really not as bad as you think." ■

Darby is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.

Eye on the Fleet

Eye on the Fleet is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Chief of Information Navy Visual News Service. We are looking for **high impact**, quality photography from **Sailors** in the fleet to showcase the American Sailor in **action**.

► GM3 Andrew Smith watches as GMC Donald Watkins fires a .50 caliber machine gun off the fantail aboard USS *George Washington* (CVN 73) deployment.

Photo by PH1 Brian Aho



◀ Lt. Col. William “Chester” Waldron, Commanding Officer of the “Black Knights” of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron VMFA 314, performs a super sonic fly-by during filming for the upcoming motion picture production “Stealth,” on board USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70).

Photo by PHAN Chris M. Valdez



◀ A student, under the watchful eye of LT Brendon Ewers, swims through a chamber that simulates the inside of an aircraft during the Aviation Water Survival Course. The Aviation Survival Training Center at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., trains and qualifies more than 8,000 military aviators each year in water survival and emergency egress techniques.

Photo by PH3 Katrina Beeler



► AN Bryan Lopezaldiva inspects the intake of an F-14 *Tomcat* assigned to Fighter Squadron (VF) 211.

Photo by PHAN Jhi L. Scott



► A member of the U.S. Navy Parachute Team, the “Leap Frogs,” jumps from an aircraft over San Diego’s Brown Field.

Photo by PH1 Alan D. Monyelle



To be considered, forward your **high resolution (5" x 7" at 300 dpi) images** with full credit and cutline information, including **full name, rank and duty station**. Name all identifiable people within the photo and include important information about what is happening, where the photo was taken and the date. Commands with digital photo capability can send attached .jpg files to: navynewsphoto@hq.navy.mil

Mail your submissions to:
Navy Visual News Service • Naval Media Center
2713 Mitscher Rd., S.W., Anacostia Annex, D.C. 20373-5819

For a new **Eye on the Fleet** everyday, click on the **Navy NewsStand's** home page, www.news.navy.mil, for fresh images of your shipmates in action.

Eye on the Fleet



▲ During a chemical, biological, and radiological drill, DC2 Jim Castillo simulates working in a contaminated environment aboard USS *John C. Stennis*.

Photo by PH2 Jayme Pastorio



◀ A hose team of U.S. Coast Guardsmen prepare to advance and engage a fire at the firefighting trainer, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island Fire School.

Photo by PH2 Michael Larson



◀ AN Uriel Berganza cleans the canopy of an F-14 *Tomcat* before the morning flight operations begin aboard USS *George Washington* (CVN 73).

Photo by PH1 Brien Aho



◀ The *Ohio* class fleet ballistic missile submarine USS *Michigan* (SSBN 727) enters Puget sound naval shipyard for refueling and conversion from a fleet ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) to a guided missile submarine (SSGN).

U.S. Navy photo



▲ EO2 John Flemming, assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 3 Det.1, San Diego, trains Kenyan EOD technicians on safe approach and inspection procedures for discovered ordnance.

Photo by PH1 Ted Banks

Eye on History

Eye on History is a monthly photo feature sponsored by the Naval Historical Center.

For more photos pertaining to naval history, go to www.history.navy.mil.



1964 ▲

The bow of USS *Kitty Hawk* (CVA 63) towers over the world's largest drydock after completion of the docking operation at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Wash.

◀ 1950

Members of a field dental unit in the South Pacific perform a dental procedure during the Korean War.



◀ 1970

The U.S. Navy's Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle is recovered by her support ship, *TransQuest*, five miles off the coast of San Diego after making her first dive. This first rescue sub, which is capable of removing 24 men at a time from a sunken or disabled submarine, stayed underwater for more than two hours, reaching a depth of 125 feet.



▲ 1952

Red Cross volunteers were ready with a hot cup of coffee for Navy Communicator Ralph Galbreath during the Tehachapi, Calif., earthquake emergency.



◀ 1955

While briefing his crew before taking their stations aboard the P-2V *Neptune*, LTJG John R. Farrell points out a suspected storm area on a weather chart.

U.S. Navy Photos Courtesy of the Naval Historical Center

Sending Troops a Taste of Home

Story by J02 Charles L. Ludwig

In my experience, there are two simple words capable of making a room aboard any deployed ship go silent for a second or two. The same two words are so powerful, dozens of adults swarm to their division's mail petty officer like a pack of famished ants descending on a sloppily prepared picnic.

And, as I can surely attest, two unpretentious words can single-handedly increase an enlisted man's morale when deployed overseas.

Those words? "Mail call!" It's like music to my ears.

It shouldn't be hard to figure out why mail call is such an integral part of a Sailor's life. On deployment, anything even hinting at a little touch of home is a welcome sight. Depending on the message or photos, it can even bring a person to tears.

But when that heart-felt message from home comes fully equipped with fare of the palate-pleasing variety, it's even better.

Some people get delicacies from their wives, grandmothers or mothers. But, some people receive their sweet tooth fulfillment in the form of a guilty pleasure steeped in the finest traditions of the United States of America.

Girl Scout cookies. (Doesn't it make you hungry just looking at it in print?)

We all should know by now the magnetized influence those little wintertime treats have on the American landscape. Every January, through order forms and Scouts working booths outside of grocery stores, millions of people spend a chunk of their early-year budget to satisfy their deep-seated cravings for Thin Mints (among other flavors).

And during the last several years, Sailors deployed out of the Naples, Italy, area have been able to join the rest of America in satisfying their taste buds via the Treats-to-Troops Program. This program lets people "sponsor" boxes of Girl Scout cookies, with

an accompanying message, to be sent to servicemen deployed around the world.

The program was the brainchild of Naval Air Mediterranean Repair Activity (NAMRA) employee Emilie Heroldwebber. Heroldwebber, a Navy spouse and Army veteran, was serving as the leader of Brownie Troop 67 when she realized her troop had just the recipe to sweeten NAMRA team deployments.

"I thought it would be a great idea if my troop sent cookies to the detachment," she said. "After talking to some other leaders, they thought it was a great idea, too, so we decided to try it on a neighborhood level."

That was back in early 2003, when a NAMRA aircraft mechanic team departed for a deployment to Kuwait in support of Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. This tiny program ended up having so much success the Scouts decided to continue the program during their 2004 sales period with a sales range extended past the NAMRA troops.

"We hope to spread the treats to as many troops as we can," Heroldwebber said. "I think the program is a great morale booster for people to show their support in a small way . . . This is something the girls feel great about, and I know

that it will make a difference in the day of our service members fighting for our freedom and the freedom of so many others in the world."

The Girl Scouts are known throughout the country for making a difference in society through their many generous humanitarian causes. Now they can revel in the fact that their contributions are making an impact worldwide.

Oh, and they're making sure they keep everyone's sweet tooth happy as well. When is mail call? ☞

Ludwig is a photojournalist assigned to All Hands.



Your entire Navy neatly in one place.



www.nko.navy.mil

his
Recruiter
warned him
it would be Tough.



But, he's up to the challenge of being a...



... are you?